

REMARKS

An excess claim fee payment letter is submitted herewith for three (3) additional independent claims.

Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-10, and 13-27 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-10, and 13-24 are amended to more clearly define the invention, claims 4, 8, and 11-12 are canceled, and claims 25-27 are added. Claims 1, 6-7, 14-15, and 18 are independent.

These amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention for the Examiner and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability.

Applicants also note that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicants' intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge that claims 6-10 and 14-24 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. This Amendment amends claims 6-7, 14-15, and 18 into independent form thereby placing claims 6-7, and 14-24 into condition for allowance. However, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are allowable.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by the Wu et al. reference. Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the Wu et al. reference in view of the Ishiharada et al. reference. Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the Wu et al. reference.

These rejections are respectfully traversed in the following discussion.

I. THE CLAIMED INVENTION

An exemplary embodiment of the claimed invention, as defined by, for example, independent claim 1, is directed to a linear luminous body that includes a light source, a light source accommodating portion in which the light source is accommodated, a light guide held by the light source accommodating portion so as to extend from the light source accommodating portion, a linear core made of a member selected from the group consisting of a metal, an alloy and a synthetic fiber, and a light-reflective layer formed on the side circumferential surface of the linear core. A light emitted from the light source is introduced into the light guide through an end surface of the light guide. A side circumferential surface of the linear core is covered with the light guide

Conventional linear luminous bodies, such as those described by the Ishiharada et al. reference, cannot be used for applications requiring a minimum strength, without requiring an external light source, and while providing a high degree of decorativeness.

In stark contrast, the present invention provides a linear luminous body with a linear core made of at least one of a metal, an alloy, and a synthetic fiber. In this manner, the linear core increases the strength of the linear luminous body and, therefore, increases the applications for which the linear luminous body may be used while providing an excellent decorative effect. (Page 4, lines 2-11).

Further, the present invention provides a linear luminous body with a light-reflective layer formed on the side circumferential surface of the linear core. In this manner, reflection of light from the surface of the linear core can be done efficiently. As a result, the amount of light-scattering material or the like contained in the light guide with which the linear core is covered can be reduced or dispensed with according to circumstances. (Page 7, line 20 - page

8, line 16).

II. THE PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. The 102(e) Wu et al. reference rejection

Regarding the rejection of claims 1-3, the Examiner alleges that the Wu et al. reference teaches the claimed invention. Applicants submit, however, that there are elements of the claimed invention which are neither taught nor suggested by the Wu et al. reference.

None of the applied references teaches or suggests the features of the claimed invention including a linear decorative body that includes a linear core that is made of one of a metal, an alloy, and a synthetic fiber nor a light-reflective layer formed on the side circumferential surface of the linear core. As explained above, these features are important for increasing the strength of the linear luminous body and, therefore, increasing the applications for which the linear luminous body may be used while providing an excellent decorative effect and for efficiently reflecting light from the surface of the linear core.

Rather, the Wu et al. reference merely discloses a linear light source device for image reading. In particular, the Wu et al. reference discloses a linear light source 10 that includes a light-guided bar 20 attached to a light source assembly 30. (Figure 11). The light-guided bar 20 is a symmetrical octagonal column 210 that is made of an optical material having a high transmittance and low absorption characteristics such as acrylic-plastic sheets.

The Wu et al. reference clearly does not teach anything at all that is even remotely related to a linear core, let alone a linear core that is made of one of a metal, an alloy, and a synthetic fiber, and a light-reflective layer formed on the side circumferential surface of the linear core as recited by independent claim 1.

Therefore, the Wu et al. reference does not teach or suggest each and every element of the claimed invention and the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw this rejection of claims 1-3.

B. The Wu et al. reference in view of the Ishiharada et al. reference

Regarding the rejection of claim 5, the Examiner alleges that the Ishiharada et al. reference would have been combined with the Wu et al. reference to form the claimed invention. Applicants submit, however, that even if combined, the combination would not teach or suggest each and every element of the claimed invention.

As explained above, none of the applied references teaches or suggests the features of the claimed invention including a linear decorative body that includes a linear core that is made of one of a metal, an alloy, and a synthetic fiber nor a light-reflective layer formed on the side circumferential surface of the linear core. These features are important for increasing the strength of the linear luminous body and, therefore, increasing the applications for which the linear luminous body may be used while providing an excellent decorative effect and for efficiently reflecting light from the surface of the linear core.

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The Examiner admits that the Wu et al. reference does not teach or suggest this feature. The Examiner then alleges that the Ishiharada et al. reference remedies the

deficiencies of the Wu et al. reference.

However, contrary to the Examiner's allegations, the Ishiharada et al. reference does not teach or suggest a linear core that is made of one of a metal, an alloy, and a synthetic fiber as recited by independent claim 1.

Rather, the Ishiharada et al. reference discloses a core that may be made from "polystyrene, a styrene-methylmethacrylate copolymer, Acrylic resin, poly methyl pentene, allyl compound glycol carbonate resin, (Meta) Spirane resin, amorphous polyolefine, a polycarbonate, a polyamide, Polyarylate, the poly ape phone, the poly allyl compound ape phone, polyether sulphone, polyether imide, polyimide, diallyl phthalate, a fluoro resin. Transparent materials, such as polyester carbonate, norbornene system resin (ARTON), alicyclic acrylic resin (OPUTORETTSU), silicon resin, acrylic rubber, and silicone rubber, are mentioned (in addition, it indicates 'an acrylic and methacrylic one; to be acrylics (meta).'" [0019]

None of the above materials is a metal, let alone an alloy.

Further, while some of these materials may qualify as being a synthetic material, the Ishiharada et al. reference does not teach or suggest any fibers at all let alone a synthetic fiber.

Clearly, none of the applied references teaches or suggests the features of the claimed invention including a linear decorative body that includes a linear core that is made of one of a metal, an alloy, and a synthetic fiber and a light-reflective layer formed on the side circumferential surface of the linear core as recited by independent claim 1.

Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claim 5.

C. The 103(a) Wu et al. reference rejection

Regarding the rejection of claim 13, the Examiner alleges that the Wu et al. reference would have been modified to form the claimed invention. Applicants submit, however, that one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would not have modified the linear light source that is disclosed by the Wu et al. reference to provide the claimed invention.

The Examiner admits that the Wu et al. reference does not teach or suggest a plurality of light guides held by the light source accommodating portion. The Examiner then alleges that it would have been obvious to “use a plurality of light guides in the device of Wu (sic) since it has been held that mere duplication of essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art.”

The Examiner fails to provide a prima facie case of obviousness by failing to provide a prior art reference that discloses each and every feature of the claimed invention and further, fails to make any attempt at all to provide any motivation to modify the teachings of the Wu et al. reference.

Firstly, it is not merely that the Wu et al. reference fails to teach or suggest “a plurality of light guides,” rather, the Wu et al. reference fails to teach or suggest a light source accommodating portion that can hold a plurality of light guides.

Rather, the Wu et al. reference merely discloses light source assemblies 30 which only have the ability to each hold a single light-guided bar 20.

Therefore, even assuming arguendo that it would have been obvious to provide a plurality of light guides as alleged by the Examiner, the light source assembly 30 that is disclosed by the Wu et al. reference is incapable of holding such a plurality of light guides.

Rather, the only discloses a light source assembly 30 that is capable of holding only one light guide.

Indeed, the Examiner does not allege that the Wu et al. reference teaches or suggests a light source accommodating portion that can hold a plurality of light guides.

Second, the Examiner also fails to present a *prima facie* case of obviousness by failing to allege that one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention would have been motivated to make the Examiner's alleged modification.

Third, the Examiner alleges that it has been held that mere duplication of essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art and cites St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co., 193 U.S.P.Q. 8.

However, the M.P.E.P. cites In re Harza, 274 F.2d 669, 124 U.S.P.Q. 378 (CCPA), which acknowledges that "mere duplication of parts has no patentable significance unless a new and unexpected result is produced." (M.P.E.P. § 214404.VI.B.)

In the present instance, as explained above, the present invention provides a plurality of light guides that are held by light source accommodating portions so as to extend from the light source accommodating portions. In this manner, light guides are connected to each other so that structures of various shapes may be obtained while simultaneously providing a structure that becomes luminous itself thereby providing an excellent decorative effect, which is a new and unexpected result.

None of the applied references teaches this new and unexpected result of being able to connect these light guides so that structures of various shapes may be obtained, let alone that the entire structure itself may become luminous.

Indeed, none of the applied references teach or suggest making any structure at all

from a plurality of light guides.

One of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to modify the teachings of the Wu et al. reference to provide the claimed invention. Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claim 13.

III. FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-10, and 13-27, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the Application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

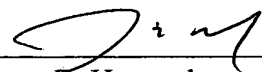
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DOCKET NO. T36-159016M/RS

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The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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